

Philippians 2.5-11

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"Maybe we need to define 'community.'"

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Origin of the Christ Hymn

1. Paul is citing an existing hymn
2. Paul is the author
 - The hymn fits Paul's argument so well
 - Only question is whether Paul wrote it
 - at some earlier time
 - when he wrote the letter
3. Hymn is non-Pauline
 - I.e., it is a later interpolation into the letter

Origin of the Christ Hymn

1. Paul is citing an existing hymn
2. Paul is the author?
 - Use of meter (but cf. 1 Cor 13)
 - Unique language of hymn
 - μορφή θεοῦ
 - ἀρπαγμός
 - ἴσα θεῷ
 - ὑπερυψώω
 - καταχθόνιος

Origin of the Christ Hymn

1. Paul is citing an existing hymn

*If Paul is citing a hymn, what is its origin?
By whom? Where? For what occasion?*

Lohmeyer argues:

 - Semitic origin (and later translated into Greek)
 - Palestine
 - Sung at Lord's Supper

Origin of the Christ Hymn

1. Paul is citing an existing hymn

Does non-Pauline authorship make it less authoritative?

1 Corinthians 15:1-7

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, ² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you -- unless you have come to believe in vain. ³ For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ...

Background of the Christ Hymn

- Gnostic Redeemer
descending/ascending BUT not humility/death
- Wisdom Pattern
equality with God, ascend/descend BUT not humility/death
- Adam Speculation
Jesus as opposite of Adam: dis/obedience, condemnation/exaltation BUT no pre-existence
- Suffering Servant (Isaiah 52-53)
death and exalted BUT no obedience or equality w/ God
- Righteous Sufferer (? – 2 & 4 Macc, Wis 2;4-5)
obedient death, afterlife BUT no equality or universal claim
- Greco-Roman Ruler Worship
pre-exist, incarnation, exalted, acclaimed BUT no obed. death

Structure of the Hymn

- Lohmeyer (meter: six stanzas, three lines each)
 - 6
 - 7ab
 - 7c8
 - 9
 - 10
 - 11
 - Jeremias (content)
 - 6-7a: pre-existence
 - 7b-8: incarnate life
 - 9-11: exaltation
- Difficulties in all cases, but “even death on a cross” does appear to be added.*

Themes of the Hymn

- Scriptural Reflection
 - Adam
 - Wisdom: Proverbs 8, Col 1:15-20
 - Isaiah 45
 - Isaiah 52-53
 - Suffering righteous ones: 2, 4 Macc, Wis 2,4-5
- Political Reality
 - Role and nature of emperors and kings
 - Formation of faithful and genuine community within (corrupt) society

Themes of the Hymn

Christ

- Pre-existent with God
- Unlimited power but used in service (slavehood) rather than coercion
- Identification with humanity
- Obedience to God
 - to death
 - even death on a cross
- Exaltation and given name of “Lord”
the ideal leader who forms the ideal community